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New York

President: Mr. Jeremic ..... (Serbia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Charles (Trinidad and Tobago) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons

Agenda item 103 (*continued*)

Crime prevention and criminal justice

The Acting President: I have been advised that some 63 speakers remain, and we are respectfully requesting that speakers limit their time for statements to five minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Eyvazov (Azerbaijan) (*spoke in Russian*): I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to explain the position of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the topic under discussion, and I thank the organizers for opening such a pressing issue up for discussion. There is no question that in today's world this modern form of slavery, trafficking in persons, especially women and children, for forced labour, every kind of exploitation and organ transplants, has become a huge problem for society all over the world. The clear challenges and threats it brings are creating an incentive for the international community to seek more effective and realistic approaches aimed at solving the problem through coordinated action.

Combating this social evil in the Republic of Azerbaijan is seen as a priority for ensuring security. The basic national legislation for it has been created and is being improved. Our country is a party to the international legal instruments related to the fight against human trafficking and is taking the necessary measures to implement the requirements of the relevant United Nations conventions and protocols in this area. An issue so urgent and multifaceted must be tackled by Government bodies in a comprehensive manner. The concrete measures being systematically put in place include defining and eliminating the causes and conditions conducive to human trafficking and the illegal migration that frequently accompanies it; identifying and ensuring the prosecution of those who organize and execute these types of criminal acts; investigating the methods and ways in which they are carried out, taking into account the frequently hidden nature of the crime and intensifying analysis of the available information and criminal intelligence.

We are strengthening border controls, and stepping up administrative pressure to increase operational and preventive measures for identifying those in the business of producing illegal passports, visas and travel documents, and offering services organizing travel abroad on various pretexts. We are conducting special investigations involving analysis, surveys and studying trafficking routes, with the aim of putting together the best possible strategies for combating human trafficking, reducing the vulnerability of various categories of persons and eliminating their risk of being pushed into forced labour or illegal transportation,

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sexual exploitation, or organ donation. We are working to raise awareness on a large scale among the population, including through mass media and contact with international non-governmental organizations and civil society. We are ensuring reliable legal and social protection and rehabilitation for victims of human trafficking.

In our view, an important part of raising security levels is also creating a system of biometric identification documents that grant the right to exit and entry.

The foundation of this multidimensional activity in Azerbaijan is a system of legal and socioeconomic preventive measures provided for through a comprehensive, effective strategy in the form of a special national plan. At the end of this year, we will evaluate the work of the national plan of action for the period 2009-2013. For several years now, an office charged with the fight against trafficking in persons has been working to organize its efforts together with those of other relevant bodies and civil organizations. Its hot-line service has had a positive effect. An assistance fund for victims has been established, with a bank account functioning in compliance with international standards and qualified personnel; a centre for support for victims of trafficking in persons ensures security for them during the time they spend there. Work has also been done to introduce necessary changes into the legislation in the area of human trafficking. We are working actively to establish close international cooperation with the outreach services of other countries.

At the same time, we are well aware of the complexity of this issue, given its global, shadowy nature and how lucrative it is for the world of crime, which is constantly seeking new ways to achieve its aims. We are currently refining and agreeing on the third part of our plan for this area; there is no question that the preparations for it are constructive and well planned, and that we will have a new plan of action that brings together an entire complex of effective measures for fighting human trafficking.

I take this opportunity to thank the representatives of international organizations, particularly the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and others that continue to provide us with support in this area. I am pleased to note that over the past few years we have established excellent cooperation with them in many different areas, which has brought results.

In our view, a priority in all this work is strengthening the international and legal basis of cooperation and multilateral, regional, and bilateral relations between countries of origin, transit and destination for trafficking, with an emphasis on timely exchanges of information, including confidential information, identifying the ways criminal activity is carried out, creating practical mechanisms to reduce the number of victims and to introduce positive experience into staff preparation. We are ready and willing to work constructively and call on all interested parties to cooperate.

We are firmly convinced that the collective efforts of the international community will help to ensure an adequate response to the challenges and threats posed by transnational organized crime in all its manifestations, to strengthen overall security and to protect the founding principles of democracy.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Ms. Honisch (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Government of Argentina, I would like to thank the United Nations for convening this meeting, which brings us together to continue working to combat human trafficking.

Argentina views the fight against trafficking in persons as a top priority. Prosecuting this crime is part of our respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of every resident of our country, regardless of their immigration status. We actively support the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in combating trafficking and understand that the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, constitute the international legal and institutional framework of reference for cooperation in the fight against this scourge.

In 2008, the Republic of Argentina enacted a law on the prevention and punishment of trafficking in persons and assistance to its victims, enshrining fully in domestic law the guidelines set out in the Convention and incorporating the crime of trafficking and illegal trafficking of immigrants directly into the penal code,

not through a special law. That standard was recently amended to promote three objectives: ensuring the effective prosecution of the crime of human trafficking and related crimes and the comprehensive protection of victims, and establishing coordination mechanisms for action involving multiple agencies.

In regard to the structure of the law, one of the major changes involves eliminating the concept of the consent of the victims in the crime of trafficking in persons, be they are minors or adults, so that consent, voluntary or not, is no longer a factor in exploitation through human trafficking. Argentine law also guarantees comprehensive assistance for victims of the crimes of trafficking and exploitation, to which they have the right regardless of their status in criminal proceedings, and establishes impunity for victims regarding crimes they may have committed while being exploited. Furthermore, foreign victims wishing to settle in Argentina may do so, while the Government will assist those who wish to return to their country of origin in doing so.

Nonetheless, Argentina realizes that it is impossible to design effective policies for combating this crime without reliable information that enables us to assess situations and measure a policy's impact. That is why we have created a comprehensive criminal information system for trafficking in persons, SISTRATA, which operates under the Ministry of Security. According to SISTRATA, since the enactment of the 2008 law, more than 4,500 victims have been rescued, 3,600 of them in the past two years. The large increase in the number in rescues demonstrates that it is a result of successful awareness campaigns that have stigmatized horribly unnatural practices. In that regard, we note that we have created complaint lines so that citizens can freely and anonymously report instances of trafficking. A direct decision of the Presidency has also banned any advertisements or announcements that promote sexual services or explicitly or implicitly solicit people for the sex trade, a measure in line with our continuing elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, and also promoting the disincentivization of consumers.

In accordance with the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, the Government of Argentina has adopted a proactive attitude, creating tools that enable the early identification of cases. To that end, we have designed specific protocols, including those related to early identification of cases of trafficking on routes and at border crossings, receiving complaints, assisting victims and conducting labour inspections. Since 2008, with the help of the office of a prosecutor dedicated to the crime of human trafficking, more than 100 people have been indicted and almost 500 are currently being processed.

Given the transnational nature of this crime, the Government of Argentina has a number of bilateral conventions in place, but beyond that we also have cooperation agreements mainly within the regional frameworks of Southern Common Market and the Union of South American Nations. This meeting demonstrates how far the international community has come in recognizing this issue. But the fight against trafficking, nationally and internationally, must not be limited to punishment or assistance without accompanying policies that address its structural causes, so that people are treated as human beings, not merchandise, nor subject to the social and gender-based discrimination that continue to exist in our societies.

Mr. Aslov (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): First and foremost, I would like to thank the President for organizing this high-level meeting.

Human trafficking is one of the most socially dangerous forms of violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Tajikistan is actively involved in the global process of combating trafficking in human beings and has taken appropriate institutional and legal measures, in particular preventive measures, to fight the scourge. Accordingly, Tajikistan has ratified all the relevant international legal instruments on the subject.

In order to meet its international obligations and to set up a national legal framework in this area, the Tajikistan criminal code was amended in August 2003 to include human trafficking as a crime. In addition to classifying trafficking in persons as a crime, mechanisms were also set up to monitor such activity in the country with a view to obtaining accurate statistical reporting on it.

Pursuant to its international commitments and with a view to coordinating its various activities in the field, the Government of Tajikistan created, in 2005, an inter-agency commission to fight human trafficking. As a standing consultative body, the commission coordinates all State activities dedicated to the fight. The commission's responsibilities include setting forth State policy and drafting recommendations on how to

improve the efficiency of all the relevant entities active in the fight against human trafficking.

A law against human trafficking was also adopted in 2004. In implementation of the law, in 2006, a comprehensive programme to combat human trafficking for the years 2006-2010 was established, which in turn led to the implementation of an efficient legal framework for preventing human trafficking and for providing protection for its victims. More recently, a similar programme was set up to cover the years 2011-2013. The basis of the programme is the implementation of appropriate anti-trafficking measures, the establishment of priorities and the creation of general Government policy on raising awareness among the general public and the most vulnerable groups and on strengthening human and technical capacity within the various bodies responsible for fighting the scourge.

We are now emphasizing the protection of victims and respect for their rights. Moreover, it is our intention to amend our national legislation to reflect that emphasis.

We have set up a joint operational working group dedicated to combating trafficking in persons, comprised of a wide range of persons, including representatives of various ministries and departments.

Special attention is also being paid to combating child trafficking. To that end, we have set up a commission for the protection of the rights of the child as well as a special Government plan to protect their rights. Currently, with the assistance of the International Organization for Migration, we are operating two centres that provide assistance to victims of human trafficking, one of which specializes in services for child victims of trafficking, in particular psychological and medical assistance for minors who have suffered from different types of exploitation, including violence, or who belong to groups at risk.

In conclusion, Tajikistan is today using all the capacity and resources it has at its disposal to tackle the scourge and bring to justice those who are perpetrating the crime of trafficking in persons.

Mr. Bernardini (Italy): Human trafficking is an affront to human dignity and a gross violation of the human rights of victims, particularly of women and girls. It has also become a major feature of transnational organized crime.

Because of its complexity, demand for human trafficking has required multidisciplinary strategies at the national, regional and international levels to become increasingly diversified. We are therefore pleased at the attention the General Assembly gave to the subject when it adopted the Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons.

Combating trafficking in human beings and protecting victims has been a long-term priority for Italy. Since the adoption of a comprehensive new immigration law in 1998, Italy's main focus has been on prevention, demand reduction, victim support and protection, anti-discrimination measures and extended law enforcement and judicial cooperation. Our legal framework is victim-centred, human-rights-oriented and gender- and child-sensitive. For example, renewable temporary residence permits are issued to victims of trafficking for humanitarian reasons and can be converted into a residence permit for study and work purposes. More than 2,640 victims per year have taken advantage of that instrument since 2003, and, in the past 10 years, approximately $100 million has been allocated for first assistance and social protection programmes.

Italy recently funded some targeted projects of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organization designed to assist and protect trafficked persons and provide international practitioners with such operational tools as the IOM *Handbook on Direct Assistance for Victims of Trafficking*. Italy is leading technical assistance programmes with China and Nigeria and various European countries to address trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation. Those programmes include research, stakeholder capacity-building and networking with the goal of improving cooperation in law enforcement and victim identification and protection.

We have made a major investment in assisting and protecting foreign minors. A special fund was created that, in 2012 alone, provided €5 million to municipalities to help them cover the costs associated with receiving and integrating minors into their communities. Let me add that those funds supplement those already available through other initiatives, such as North African Emergency, to welcome migrant minors from that region.

The Minister of Labour has also sponsored social and work integration projects to help support foreign

minors, guaranteeing their ability to remain in Italy until their eighteenth year.

Italy is firmly convinced that the fundamental instrument to tackle human trafficking internationally is the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, in particular the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. One of Protocol's main purposes is to protect and assist the victims of such trafficking, with full respect for their human rights. Article 6 of the Protocol is dedicated to providing assistance and protection to the victims of trafficking. The many provisions it contains range from physical, psychological and social recovery to appropriate housing, medical and material assistance and employment, educational and training opportunities. The binding nature of the instrument makes those measures effective. It also explains why our first task should be to improve the implementation of, and achieve universal adherence to, existing international instruments, including conventions on forced labour, human rights and the protection of women and children. In our view, the Global Plan of Action represents an extraordinary opportunity to mobilize our common determination and political will in that direction, raise awareness of the serious crime of human trafficking and allow for better coordination within the United Nations system and among Governments, the business sector, civil society and the media.

Last but not least, Italy attaches great importance to the vital work against human trafficking carried out in Vienna by the Conference of the States Parties to the Palermo Convention and by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. We believe that that mechanism and body best serve our common fight against human trafficking.

Mr. Starčević (Serbia): Today, human trafficking, as a form of organized crime, is present worldwide in its various, often hidden forms, with different trends and patterns in different parts of the world. To combat this contemporary form of slavery, we need to make concerted efforts at all levels through cooperation by all stakeholders, including Governments, civil society, the private sector, media and international organizations. That is why the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, the appraisal of which we are undertaking at this high-level meeting of the General Assembly, was adopted in 2010. This is an excellent opportunity to exchange views on the complex issue of human trafficking, identify trends, gaps and new challenges and share experiences and best practices in fighting that humiliating and degrading crime.

Serbia aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/67/PV.77). Therefore, the focus of my statement will be on addressing the problem of human trafficking from our national perspective.

Since 2001, when Serbia ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, numerous legislative and institutional measures have been adopted and various other activities embarked upon in order to address the complex problem of human trafficking in an effective and comprehensive way.

Human trafficking has been an offence under the criminal code of Serbia since 2003. In 2009, our National Assembly amended the code by increasing the minimum and maximum punishment for that criminal offence. As another deterrent measure, the code further provided that the users of the services of victims of human trafficking shall be punished with imprisonment, which is in accordance with the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, which the Republic of Serbia ratified in 2009.

Our first national strategy against human trafficking, aimed at ensuring a timely and comprehensive response to that complex problem, was adopted in 2006. It provided for the elaboration of comprehensive strategic goals, which were implemented through various activities by Government agencies, in close cooperation with non-governmental, international and other organizations, within the national plan of action to combat human trafficking for the period 2009 to 2011.

To calibrate the strategic response of the Republic of Serbia to the changing nature of human trafficking, the new national strategy to prevent and suppress human trafficking and protect its victims for the period 2013 to 2018 and an accompanying national plan of action were drafted in 2012. The strategy is expected to provide for a continued and comprehensive response by society to the challenges presented by human trafficking: a better system of prevention; improved assistance to, and

the protection of human rights of victims; the timely identification and efficient prosecution of offenders; and institutional capacity-building, in both the Government and civil sector. In March and April 2013, a public debate was held on those strategic documents, and they are expected to be adopted soon.

At the institutional level, various bodies were established in order to enhance and strengthen inter-sectoral cooperation among the relevant Government institutions, as well as with other stakeholders. The Council against Human Trafficking, established in 2005, defines national policy, proposes measures and devises and adopts strategic and comprehensive goals against human trafficking. It includes the Minister of the Interior, who chairs the Council, and other relevant ministers. The national team against human trafficking, headed by a national coordinator, consists of representatives of Government agencies and non-governmental and international organizations. The team is charged with fashioning measures and ways to implement the strategic goals devised by the Council against Human Trafficking, which conform with the international standards, obligations and responsibilities of the Republic of Serbia. An important part of the national mechanism is the Service for the Coordination of the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking, established in 2004. The Service identifies victims of human trafficking, including children, provides protection and advises victims of available assistance programmes. In April 2012, the Centre for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking was established within Serbia's social protection system.

In order to raise public awareness about the problem, particularly among the young in our population, the Serbian Government, in close cooperation with the media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and international organizations, has been organizing media campaigns, educational workshops, training programmes and other projects about human trafficking. Bearing in mind that the vast majority of the victims of human trafficking are women and children, a human-rights-based, gender- and age-sensitive approach is essential in coping with that degrading and humiliating crime.

Since 2007, 18 October has been set aside as the European day against human trafficking. Throughout the month, various events are organized, featuring preventive activities through round tables, panel discussions in schools and other educational institutions and radio and television chat shows. A prominent role in that regard is played by the Red Cross of Serbia, whose activities are focused on prevention, while target groups are primarily youth and children, particularly vulnerable children. The Red Cross activities are aimed at educating individuals and groups in order to enable them to recognize the problem, its forms and various ways of tricking people into the human trafficking chain, in ways that are appropriate to the target age group, providing practical tips on staying safe. The Red Cross of Serbia conducts interactive workshops in more than 100 local branches throughout Serbia through a network of 500 trained volunteers.

In the period from 2010 to 2012, the Government of Serbia, in cooperation with the NGO sector, the relevant United Nations agencies and other international organizations — the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) — implemented a joint programme to combat human trafficking in Serbia. The main goals of the project were to strengthen national capacities, create a sustainable framework for systematically preventing trafficking in human beings, strengthen the criminal justice response and improve mechanisms for the protection and reintegration of potential and actual victims of human trafficking. As one of the activities within that project, a regional conference entitled "Criminal justice response to human trafficking in South-East Europe" was held in Belgrade in October 2012. Approximately 80 professionals from the region took part in the conference.

Our national activities to fight human trafficking are based on the "four Ps" approach, namely, prosecution, protection, prevention and partnerships at the national, regional and international levels. As with all other forms of organized crime, human trafficking recognizes no borders. We therefore believe that, through the strengthening of national legislation and building of institutional capacities, improved cross-border regional and international cooperation, the universal ratification and implementation of the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and the active implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, we can achieve significant results in fighting, and eventually eradicating, human trafficking. The first UNODC *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*,

launched in February, and this high-level meeting are encouraging steps in the right direction.

Ms. Hosking (South Africa): My delegation thanks the President of the General Assembly for having convened this important high-level meeting.

South Africa aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Côte d'Ivoire on behalf of the Africa Group (see A/67/PV.77).

This high-level meeting comes at an opportune time indeed, building as it does on the recent adoption of the agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls at the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, where trafficking in women and girls was highlighted as an issue of growing global concern.

We welcome the 2012 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, which starkly illustrates the alarming scale of the challenge that is pervasive in its global scope and reach. It transcends all national, subregional and continental boundaries, with no country remaining untouched by its terrible consequences, whether as a country of origin, transit or destination for victims.

The causes and consequences of human trafficking are complex. South Africa therefore welcomes the participation of all relevant actors in the interactive panels, which will serve to enrich our understanding of the phenomenon. Undoubtedly, the contributions by Member States, United Nations entities, experts, civil society representatives, the private sector and the media are critical to shaping a collective, coordinated, integrated and effective global response to combating the terrible scourge of human trafficking.

South Africa is particularly concerned at the increase in trafficking in human organs, as well as in the trafficking of persons for purposes of organ removal. The profits gained from the international trade in human organs are significant and have given rise to the involvement of organized criminal syndicates. Developing countries, where the sale of human organs by victims is seen as an opportunity to escape poverty, are the most at risk.

Strengthening international responses through the development of global standards and norms will therefore represent a positive step forward in combating this category of criminal activity. A comprehensive strategy will need to be developed that also looks at addressing its root causes. In that regard, we look forward to the outcome of the meeting of the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons, to take place later this year, which will focus particular attention on this issue. In that context, we underline the urgent need for data collection to assist Member States to assess the extent of this illegal activity and develop appropriate interventions.

Undoubtedly, the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons provides an enabling framework to promote the universal ratification of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Its implementation at the national, regional and international levels through the enactment of strong national legislation, the establishment of bilateral cooperation agreements and other international support measures must be accorded a high priority.

My delegation is pleased to report that a combating of trafficking in persons bill was passed by our National Assembly in 2012 and is due to be promulgated into national law. That bill borrows from international best practices and lessons learned, recognizing therein the need for legislation that more effectively addresses the multifaceted challenges of trafficking in a comprehensive and holistic manner. The four core pillars of prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership are also at the centre of the legislation. Ultimately, it will give effect to South Africa's obligations as a State party to the Convention and, importantly, provide for the prosecution of offenders, as well as appropriate penalties and sanctions.

At the subregional level, South Africa will continue to work with our Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) counterparts towards the full and effective implementation of the Regional Strategic Plan of Action on Combating Human Trafficking, Especially Women and Children, adopted at the SADC ministerial conference on development held in Maputo in 2009. In that regard, we are grateful to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for the assistance provided to the Southern African region over the past four years in support of strengthening our responses to more effectively address challenges relating to the trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.

At the continental level, South Africa fully supports the 2006 Ouagadougou Plan of Action on Trafficking in

Human Beings, Especially Women and Children, and its effective implementation.

The South African Government attaches great importance to its international obligations through the ratification of legal instruments. Our history has taught us that international cooperation is critical to addressing global challenges. We are also conscious of our responsibility as a State party to the Convention to address the challenge through a human rights-based approach.

In conclusion, we are confident that the outcome of this meeting will provide renewed impetus to national, subregional and international efforts towards the elimination of this terrible scourge. We are hopeful that the 2014 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* will reflect positive progress in the global fight to end the evil of human trafficking in all its forms and manifestations.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened this important high-level meeting to appraise the work achieved by the United Nations and its Member States in combating trafficking in persons. Bahrain, as a founding member of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking, is very pleased to participate in this meeting. We also welcome the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, launched by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Trafficking in persons — without a doubt among the most serious of crimes — is a transnational phenomenon that incorporates a range of different aspects, including slavery, violations of human rights, servitude and bondage. All of that runs contrary to our Islamic traditions, which respect human dignity.

The latest developments in my country in this area have been based on our national and international commitments to combating human trafficking and on our respect for human dignity. Bahrain is devoting immense efforts to its national plan to combat trafficking with a view to raising awareness and understanding of the relevant law among nationals and non-nationals alike, including foreign workers and residents. Officials in Bahrain are working with international organizations to develop cooperation plans in the area of training with a view to raising awareness through spiritual and religious leaders.

Bahrain has adopted various reform measures. In 2009, action was taken with regard to work permits for foreign nationals and the regulation of foreign workers in our country. Legislators have not sought to limit the freedom of movement of workers outside the law. Bahrain is tackling this issue with a great deal of transparency in the light of the threat that it represents. Law No.1 of 2008 was adopted to address the fight against human trafficking, on the basis of a decree issued by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, by establishing a committee comprising representatives of Government institutions and civil society organizations, to combat human trafficking.

A special unit has also been established within the Ministry of the Interior to counter this phenomenon. A number of people work around the clock at that centre to receive victims' complaints. Moreover, our English-language television channel broadcasts an information programme in English and Tagalog in order to raise awareness among Filipino workers in our country. In addition, we are working to provide assistance to victims of trafficking.

In conclusion, as we undertake this appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, we are also strengthening our efforts in the areas of coordination and cooperation at the international, national, bilateral, regional and subregional levels. In particular, we are trying to step up efforts between transit and destination countries and to leverage exchanges of information in the area of the training of officials in order to combat trafficking in persons. Bahrain will remain steadfast in the efforts to combat this scourge at all levels.

Mr. Geier (Germany): Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday on behalf of the European Union (see A/67/PV.77).

This high-level meeting on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, being held over three days, is drawing international attention to an important subject. I would like to thank the two co-facilitators for their efforts in organizing this event.

Germany hopes that this meeting will reinforce the political will of all participants to make full use of the existing legal instruments in the fight against human trafficking. In that context, I would like to stress the fundamental role of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

and its Protocols, in particular the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, signed in Palermo. Those are the legally binding instruments upon which we rely. Let us use this high-level meeting to reiterate how much importance the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons attaches to the universal ratification and to the implementation of those instruments.

Our meeting should also serve to give increased momentum to the ongoing discussions in Vienna aimed at creating an effective review mechanism to monitor the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols. At the same time, we need to acknowledge the good work against human trafficking under way in Vienna and that done by the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in Geneva. There is no need to duplicate existing successful mechanisms and processes.

Having actively engaged in the drafting of the Council of Europe's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Germany ratified the Convention last December. It is a document that stands out. Its scope is broader than the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as it covers all forms of human trafficking, including national trafficking in persons. The Council of Europe's Convention also provides broader protection to victims. Finally, the Council of Europe's Convention establishes a unique monitoring mechanism.

In 2004, Germany initiated the mandate of a special rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, within the framework of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. Germany has also co-facilitated a number of Human Rights Council resolutions on remedies for the victims of human trafficking and on regional cooperation in the fight against trafficking in persons. Later this month, Germany will host a consultative meeting, organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, on strengthening partnerships and exchanging best practices and experiences with national special rapporteurs and equivalent mechanisms.

Germany regularly supports projects to combat human trafficking, both in bilateral and multilateral contexts. In 2008 and 2009, we funded a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) project to combat human trafficking in the Western Balkans with nearly €500,000. We have given €130,000 for a United Nations project in the Mekong region. Another prominent example of the projects we support is the Red Card against trafficking in women project during the European Football Championship in 2012.

Human trafficking constitutes a serious crime. It is also a blatant violation of the dignity and human rights of the victims, particularly women and children. Germany remains strongly committed to the fight against human trafficking.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): Today's high-level meeting on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons is a welcome opportunity to assess our achievements and to address ongoing challenges in our global efforts to combat trafficking. I would like to thank Belarus, Austria and Cape Verde for their leadership in this effort.

Human trafficking and related exploitative practices are abhorrent crimes. Around the world, slavery, servitude and forced labour are the daily reality for many millions of people. It is a deeply dehumanizing and criminal practice to which no country is immune.

Combating human trafficking requires a comprehensive response targeting activities across the trafficking cycle. Australia is working domestically, regionally and internationally in our collaborative efforts to address trafficking. Since 2003, we have committed more than $150 million to such efforts.

Our international efforts must support the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Trafficking in Persons Protocol, which serve as the primary legally binding international instruments for combating human trafficking. We strongly encourage States that have not yet done so to ratify and fully implement those instruments.

Strong criminal justice responses are critical to deterrence and prevention. Domestically, Australia has in place strong anti-trafficking laws with severe penalties, including for offences relating to slavery, slavery-like practices and trafficking in persons. We continue always to strengthen those.

The Australian Parliament recently passed new legislation to enhance the capacity of investigators and prosecutors to address human trafficking. We broadened the scope of exploitative behaviour that is covered and criminalized under the law and introduced new offences for forced marriage, harbouring a victim, forced labour and organ trafficking.

On 8 March, Australian Prime Minister Gillard announced a new anti-slavery initiative to address labour exploitation in business and Government procurement. That strategy aims to ensure that no company tainted by human trafficking, slavery or forced labour anywhere in the supply chain can provide goods or services to the Government.

Regional efforts are also critical. Across the Asia-Pacific region, Australia funds activities to combat human trafficking and to help build the capacity of States to meet their international obligations. In November 2012, we announced a $50 million investment to establish the Australia-Asia Programme to Combat Trafficking in Persons. The Programme provides technical assistance in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam to help strengthen criminal justice capacities across South-East Asia.

Along with Indonesia, Australia also co-chairs the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, which is the pre-eminent regional body in the Asia-Pacific region for addressing human trafficking, strengthening criminal justice responses and providing protection, services and support to survivors.

We all know that it is fundamental to address the root causes that make people vulnerable to trafficking, including the lack of social and economic opportunity. The *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* lays bare the critical gender dimensions of human trafficking, with women and girls accounting for more than 70 per cent of those trafficked. More must be done in the areas of protection and service support to survivors.

Building on our contribution of $200,000 last year to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Australia is pleased to announce a further contribution to support humanitarian, legal and financial assistance to survivors, much of which is implemented by non-governmental organizations that provide critical services on the ground.

Addressing transnational crimes of this scale requires Governments, civil society organizations, regional and international bodies and the private sector to work together. We look forward to continuing to work with other stakeholders on the Global Plan of Action and other international efforts to address this heinous crime.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, please allow me to express our gratitude to the presidency of the General Assembly for the opportunity to discuss the issue of human trafficking at this high-level meeting. As a current global threat, human trafficking is as great a social danger as are drug trafficking and terrorism. We are convinced that today's event will contribute to the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in coordinating international cooperation to combat human trafficking.

The Russian Federation, as an active member of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking, has from the beginning actively taken part in developing the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Today's event is an excellent opportunity to take stock of the work done over the past three years. The Global Plan of Action, as a road map to combat trafficking in persons, has done a great deal to consolidate and coordinate the efforts of Governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector to that end.

As has already been underscored during this discussion, human trafficking is global in nature. With regard to coordinating measures, we would like to note that combating this criminal enterprise must be focused on both supply and demand. We believe that only a comprehensive approach such as the one laid out in the Global Plan of Action will yield significant results. At the same time, as we have often stated, it is essential to eliminate the root causes of trafficking: legalized sex industries and the constant demand for a cheap, powerless labour force in countries that consume living goods, as well as the low standard of living for families with children, the feminization of poverty, unemployment in States with the largest flows of migrants and illicit trafficking in human organs and tissues. Also, strict measures must be taken to combat criminal groups. They are the intermediaries for illegal transactions involving those living goods.

We note the efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, the

Council of the Baltic Sea States and other regional organizations in preventing and eliminating human trafficking. However, we believe that, in order to avoid duplication of effort in those organizations, practical cooperation must be undertaken, with the United Nations playing a coordinating role. In that regard, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is of special importance. As the main United Nations body responsible for combatting trafficking, we highly value the work of the Office in that area. We also would like to note the contributions of non-governmental organizations, which do a great deal not only to increase awareness of the trafficking issue, but also in providing practical assistance to victims of that crime. At the same time, our countries' law enforcement agencies, which work together closely to combat human trafficking, are of key importance in implementing the Global Plan of Action.

In conclusion, I would like once again to reaffirm Russia's commitment to implementing the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and to strengthening international cooperation in that area.

Ms. Grignon (Kenya): I would like to thank the President for convening this important high-level meeting on human trafficking.

The delegation of Kenya aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire on behalf of the African Group (see A/67/PV.77).

The Kenyan delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for his reports on the subject matter and for his commitment and that of the United Nations system, in particular its agencies, for their work in ridding society of the shameful scourge that is human trafficking.

Although it is difficult to put a precise figure on the number of victims and survivors of human trafficking, we have a good sense of who the victims are. They are mostly children, young adults and female. Their numbers continue to spiral out of control. Apart from robbing the victims of their inherent human dignity, this abhorrent international crime is a blot on human consciousness and impacts negatively on society as a whole. Regardless of the numbers, they represent broken and destroyed lives. The international community surely cannot sit idly by and watch as society suffers from this indignity. Perpetrators, profiteers and those who encourage that inhumane trade must be prosecuted. We surely cannot end human trafficking without ending impunity.

African Heads of State and Government decided to take action because Africa was fast becoming the epicentre of human trafficking. Africa is today a source, transit and destination of human trafficking. Africa is a source because of poverty in some quarters, weak institutions to check against crime, feeble prosecutorial and judicial capacities and conspiracies by international criminals. The United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, adopted over two years ago, was meant to coherently collate our collective efforts and help stop trafficking.

The Global Plan of Action tasked every community, country, organization and society as a whole to collaboratively play its part to end trafficking. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration and the Human Rights Council and other United Nations bodies have separately reported on their work in combating trafficking in persons. Member States have also reported on their individual activities. The significant transnational and cross-border nature of trafficking, in particular in women and girls, makes bilateral, regional and international cooperation critical to combat and eliminate this scourge.

Kenya is fast becoming a source, transit and at times destination of trafficked persons. Kenya is party to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol. The Government has put in place legislative, policy and programmatic measures to address those challenges. The Government is collaboratively addressing the push-and-pull factors that make trafficking thrive. Kenya is also working with other security and law enforcement agencies in the region to map out strategies to combat cross-border crime. Kenya's judiciary includes an international crime section, while the Office of the Prosecutor has dedicated staff to combating those crimes. The UNODC has supported the Government by providing training and technical support to various institutions that deal with drugs and crime. The Government and civil society have been carrying out campaigns to combat trafficking. All those efforts have led to the arrest, prosecution and detention of perpetrators and profiteers.

It is in that regard that my delegation proposes that, in line with the Global Plan of Action, the Assembly establish a mechanism to supplement efforts to combat

trafficking in persons, especially in women and girls. The task force should work with Governments, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and victims and survivors to specifically assess, collate and collaboratively enhance our actions in combating trafficking in persons.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate its support for the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. We will tirelessly work with other Member States, the United Nations system, civil society and other stakeholders to ensure that the international community provides proper guidance to deal with that scourge.

We must do more to identify the vulnerable and protect them from trafficking. We also have to provide those rescued with shelter and an opportunity to start a new life. Measures should also be taken to remedy the wrongs committed against victims. My delegation believes that the mechanism we have propose will work towards advancing the rights of those trafficked.

Mr. Prosor (Israel): Every year, hundreds of thousands of people, mostly women and children, are trafficked across borders worldwide. This is a crime of humanity against humanity. The trafficking of human beings has no place in a civilized world. It should outrage every person because it debases our fellow human beings. It should outrage every community because it erodes societies. And it should outrage every nation because it funds organized crime and threatens public safety.

Like illegal drugs and weapons trading, human trafficking is a multibillion dollar industry that fuels criminal organizations. It takes place in almost every corner of the world and is one of the fastest-growing criminal activities.

One victim of this crime is Yana. She was born in Ukraine. Yana was smuggled across the Egyptian border and into Israel in 2005. For years, Yana was exploited as a sexual slave and sold between trafficking networks as though she were an object and not a person. As soon as Yana saw the opportunity to escape, she seized it and returned home to Ukraine. When her captors were caught, Yana travelled to Israel to testify as a witness at their trial. She also provided testimony on behalf of other victims who had been trafficked across the Egyptian border. Yana displayed tremendous courage when she agreed to return to Israel to ensure that her captors were prosecuted and other women would not have to suffer like she did.

Like Yana, millions around the world have endured the unspeakable horror of human trafficking. We can no longer allow this suffering to continue unchallenged. The fight against human trafficking is a fight for human rights. Every decent person and responsible nation must undertake this fight.

The fight against human trafficking is a priority for the Government of Israel. We are a party to the Palermo Trafficking in Persons Protocol. In fact, we are so supportive of those "two Ps" — the Palermo Protocol — that we are combating human trafficking through three other Ps: prevention, prosecution and protection.

First, with regard to prevention, in 2006 we introduced tough anti-trafficking legislation in Israel and adopted a national plan of action. Uprooting the plague of trafficking and slavery requires partnerships at all levels. We therefore appointed a national anti-trafficking coordinator to coordinate efforts between the Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Secondly, with regard to prosecution, we invested in our intelligence and law enforcement communities to identify trafficking networks, prosecute perpetrators and enforce tough sentences. We also require convicted traffickers to provide financial compensation to victims.

Thirdly, with regard to protection, we have introduced a network of services to help locate trafficked persons and provide victims with support. They are given a safe place to stay, free legal aid and the medical and psychological support they need to begin their rehabilitation. We also initiated a programme to recognize individuals who have made a significant contribution in the battle against human trafficking.

Ten years ago there were approximately 3,000 cases of human trafficking in Israel; today there are only a handful. But even one case is one too many. Our success is largely thanks to the valuable partnerships we have formed with NGOs. They are critical in every phase of the process, from locating victims and educating them about their rights to ongoing rehabilitation. If it were not for the efforts of civil society, Israel would not have been able to almost eliminate human trafficking.

In addition to our work at home, we are active in the international community and are sharing our expertise. We have partnered with the International Organization for Migration to monitor trafficking networks and put predators where they belong, behind bars.

I would also like to commend the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for its leadership in this field. Israel is proud to collaborate with and contribute to the UNODC to advance global efforts for this important human rights issue.

Along with international partners, this August Israel will host an international seminar on trafficking in human beings. We expect this initiative will expand the global network of judges to foster cross-border collaboration and the exchange of information.

Trafficking preys on those without a voice. We must be the voice of the man who was lured by the promise of a higher paying job, but ended up toiling in hard labour under the threat of violence. And we must be the voice of the woman who tried to escape poverty but was locked in servitude, starved and abused, with no means of escape. And we must be the voice of the child who was told she would have a better life but was raped and forced into prostitution. Every one of us has a responsibility. Every nation must take action by passing strong anti-trafficking laws, strengthening enforcement mechanisms and introducing tougher penalties.

In 2005, when Yana was smuggled into Israel, there were thousands like her who were lured into servitude and prostitution. Today Israel has almost eradicated the plague of human trafficking. We are at the forefront of the fight and stand ready to share our expertise with other nations.

The international community — all of us in this Hall — must unite behind the efforts to stand up for victims like Yana. We must show them that they are not alone. With our help, they can become not only survivor, but they can retake control of their destiny and lead the way for others.

Ms. Bourne (Barbados): As a signatory to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Barbados fully supports the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Trafficking in persons is a heinous crime that requires a forceful response internationally as well as at the national and regional levels. It is therefore heartening to participate in this high-level meeting and to hear the strong commitment expressed by Member States for the Global Plan of Action.

It is recognized that trafficking in persons constitutes a vicious cycle that affects women disproportionately. It thrives in conditions of poverty, where respect for the rule of law and human rights is at its weakest. It is also recognized that because we live in an interconnected world, no country or region is immune from trafficking in persons. It is a global phenomenon that requires global collaboration if the cycle is to be broken.

The goal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action is to do just that — to break the cycle and eradicate the scourge of Trafficking in Persons — with a focus on the four pillars of prevention, protection for victims, prosecution of the perpetrators and forging partnerships. For its part, Barbados has implemented a number of measures at the national level to enable it to meet its obligations at the international level, including the following.

In 2011, Barbados passed legislation providing for the prosecution of suspected offenders, thus making trafficking in persons a criminal offence, in line with the Protocol. In February 2012, Barbados established a national task force for the prevention of trafficking in persons. That entity, chaired by the Attorney-General, comprises representatives from the ministries and agencies with responsibility for public prosecutions, gender affairs, immigration, law enforcement, labour and social security, as well as civil society organizations. Barbados has also established a dedicated sex crimes and human trafficking unit within the police force to investigate all suspected cases of trafficking.

Immigration officials, officers of the police force and the coast guard and representatives of other relevant stakeholders have benefited from specialized training through technical cooperation programmes funded by regional and bilateral partners. In addition, there are ongoing public awareness programmes on human trafficking to assist in the recognition of instances of trafficking and to educate the general public and potential victims and their families.

The Government of Barbados is continuing its long-standing partnership with civil society to provide

services for the recovery of trafficked persons, including the provision of health services and safe shelter.

Barbados is encouraged that our efforts have started to show results. Challenges, however, remain. We must emphasize the critical importance of technical cooperation and international assistance in building and strengthening the national capacity to respond to human trafficking, especially in the case of small, vulnerable developing countries such as Barbados and the countries of the Caribbean.

In conclusion, I reiterate Barbados' strong commitment to continuing to play an active role in combating trafficking in persons at the national level and to working with regional and international partners with a view to achieving full implementation of the Global Plan of Action.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Human Security Network, namely, Austria, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Panama, Switzerland, Thailand, Slovenia, South Africa, as an observer, and my own country, Chile. The Human Security Network is an informal group of States that advocates a people-centred, holistic approach to security, which complements the more traditional understanding of national and international security.

In our interconnected and changing world, human beings face complex threats that affect their human security. Human trafficking is one such threat and is a global crime that exploits women, children and men, enslaving them in forced labour, domestic servitude or sexual exploitation. It critically affects the core activities and functions of human lives, and the physical and psychological safety, dignity and well-being of victims.

As we discussed at the Interactive Dialogue on Prevention of Human Trafficking, held during the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly on 3 April, unfortunately, human trafficking is now one of the fastest-growing criminal industries. It is a pervasive and widespread phenomenon that affects every country in the world, as a country of either origin, transit or destination for victims. Moreover, according to the 2012 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), people of at least 136 different nationalities were trafficked and detected in 118 different countries.

Given that this is a complex and global phenomenon, the international community requires a holistic and global response that is fully integrated in the areas of security, human rights and development, and that keeps the human being at its centre. As mentioned in the UNODC report, a global response should address a number of different dimensions, including prevention, assistance and protection for victims; rigorous prosecution and enforcement by the criminal justice system; a sound migration policy; a firm regulation of labour markets; and increased regional and international cooperation. Although the State is often the main contributor to human security, other actors such as the United Nations system, international organizations, local communities, civil society, the private sector and the media should also contribute to a comprehensive and coordinated response to combat trafficking in persons.

The human security approach, as agreed in resolution 66/290, recognizes that particular attention should be paid to vulnerable people. In the case of human trafficking, it is necessary to consider that women account for between 55 and 60 per cent of victims, with women and girls together accounting for about 75 per cent. We express our concern regarding the increase in the number of child victims, especially girls and, in some particular industries, young boys.

We would also note that the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security has carried out some projects to address trafficking in persons. As members of the Network, we share a common and deep commitment to preventing and combating human trafficking. The international community has important tools at its disposal, such as the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, the Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, as well as the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. We need to make better use of those tools to make a significant impact on the daily lives of people on the ground.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I should now like to make the some remarks in my national capacity.

Chile has not been spared the tragic phenomenon of trafficking in persons, but is a country of origin, transit and destination of women victims of trafficking. We believe that this complex phenomenon must be

addressed using three different approaches, that is, as a crime, as a violation of human rights and as a transnational phenomenon.

In that regard, in 2008 Chile established an intersectoral working group led by the under-secretary of the Ministry of the Interior, with the ultimate aim of developing a national action plan. We completed that initiative in 2011 with the enactment of a law that defines for the first time in our legislation the illicit trafficking of migrants and persons as crimes.

We are now in the final phase of reviewing and discussing the national plan, which will be officially launched next June. The plan follows very closely the main recommendations and guidelines of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol against Trafficking, and is structured around the strategic pillars contained in the Global Plan of Action, namely, prevention, prosecution, protection and assistance to victims, and institutional cooperation and coordination. To meet the goal of ensuring a human rights perspective, we have incorporated the protection of and assistance to victims into our plan, without discrimination of any sort, be it based on gender, age, ethnicity, social class, country of origin, sexual orientation, occupation or health.

In parallel, in the light of the fact that in Chile the majority of victims of trafficking are women and girls, the Government prioritized raising awareness on the commercial sexual exploitation of children; protecting the women victims of human trafficking; and strengthening the protection of the rights of women, boys, girls and adolescents, and of native peoples, migrants and refugees and native peoples.

In terms of assistance, in April 2012, the Government implemented a pilot project on shelters, in collaboration with a non-governmental organization for the protection of women victims of trafficking, both Chileans and foreign nationals, and with or without children. In the coming years, we hope to increase the number of shelters throughout the country.

In the area of prosecution, judicial and law enforcement services have continued to make progress in investigating cases of forced labour and sexual exploitation. In that context, Chilean courts in 2012 issued the first sentence for trafficking of persons involving internal trafficking. This was the first ruling by the Chilean judiciary since the law was enacted one year prior, in 2011.

With regard to international cooperation, at the regional level Chile has a technical cooperation agreement with the secretariat of the Organization of American States on the trafficking of persons and migrants. We also cooperate through the Common Market of the South on early detection of trafficking situations in border areas and work with the Union of South American Nations on cooperation and coordination of prevention, prosecution, protection and provision of assistance to victims.

We know there is still a long way to go and much work to be done, both at the national level and at the regional and international levels, but we remain convinced that this high-level meeting will be one step in the right direction towards raising awareness about this global problem. At the same time, the conclusions of this meeting will make a significant contribution to the appraisal of the goals set out in the Global Plan of Action.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): I thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened this high-level meeting to carry forward the momentum to combat modern-day slavery. I also thank the Secretary-General for championing this cause as a priority of his agenda.

We also express our appreciation to the permanent representative of Austria and Cape Verde for their significant contributions to today's discussions.

My delegation believes that multi-pronged cooperation would allow us to achieve an institutional, victim-centred and dignity-based approach. There can be no effective outcome from the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons unless it is reinforced at the national and regional levels. I shall therefore briefly highlight Kazakhstan's experience in implementing the Plan, and the lessons learned at both of those levels.

Comprehensive data, sound policies and coordination are the key elements of success. Having realized that, the Government has created an inter-departmental committee to counter smuggling and human trafficking, under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice and including the heads of several Government agencies. In the framework of that committee, existing laws were amended and new national legislation in keeping with international norms introduced. Criminal laws now have provisions criminalizing trafficking activities.

Given the trans-border nature of human trafficking, Kazakhstan is actively developing cooperation in the fight against this crime with countries of origin and destination, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Organization for Migration and numerous domestic non-governmental organizations as a step in the right direction.

Today, my country is party to all the key international treaties in the field of combating all forms of slavery, and has created national legislation to support each of these global instruments. In addition, in July 2008, the Supreme Court adopted a regulatory decision for all our national courts and tribunals to directly apply the international treaties in their work.

In the period from 2009 to 2011, Kazakhstan signed a number of international treaties on mutual legal assistance and legal relations in the areas of exchange operational investigations, implementing concrete operations, networking with criminologists, initiating large-scale preventative activities and searching for fugitives and missing persons.

Significant steps have been taken by the Government in signing special agreements on a bilateral basis with Belarus, the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, France, Saudi Arabia, Spain, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates and the United States of America. The objectives of those memorandums of understanding are to strengthen the fight against human trafficking by addressing it in the broader context of the fight against organized crime and illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals, as well as terrorism and other crimes.

In addition, the Ministries of Justice, the Interior, Labour and Social Affairs, and Culture are working together and in partnership with non-governmental organizations to protect the rights and freedoms of the victims of human trafficking and to promote their reintegration into society.

My delegation also calls on Member States to make contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund, without whose support assistance to victims would not be possible.

Kazakhstan's Ministry of Internal Affairs is currently finalizing a memorandum of understanding for cooperation with the International Organization for Migration on data exchange, technical support and guidance.

We appreciate the leadership that Belarus has shown in bringing together the United Nations and its Member States to respond to the problem. With 20 like-minded Member States, it established the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking during the 2005 Millennium Summit.

On 30 July 2010, the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly to address the scourge in collaboration with all stakeholders, Governments, the United Nations system, other intergovernmental and international organizations, civil society, the private sector and the media. Much more could be achieved if we also received robust support from the Group of Friends' diplomatic representatives based in Vienna and Geneva.

Finally, Kazakhstan has endeavoured to implement the specifics of the Plan of Action and each legal instrument at the national and regional levels, which are essential for the overall effectiveness of the Plan as a whole. My country stands fully committed to join the multilateral effort to not let the horrific crime of trafficking in persons continue into the twenty-second century.

Mr. Barriga (Liechtenstein): I thank the President for convening today's high-level meeting on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Three years after its adoption, it is timely to take stock of its achievements and identify issues that need our increased attention. We need to renew our commitment to no longer tolerate trafficking in persons in whatever form it occurs.

Trafficking in persons is a heinous and insidious crime that treats persons as mere commodities and fundamentally undermines their human rights and dignity. It often does irreparable harm to victims, and thus also represents a danger to the social fabric of entire communities. To combat trafficking in persons comprehensively and effectively, we need the engagement of a broad array of stakeholders — Governments, criminal justice systems, civil society, the private sector, the media and, most importantly, victims themselves. Discussions in the General Assembly and elsewhere must therefore give a central role to the victims of trafficking.

The Global Plan has fostered our understanding of the different dimensions of successful strategies to combat trafficking, including through prevention, prosecution and protection. We have made significant progress in establishing global legal standards to address trafficking in persons. We sincerely hope that the Palermo Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols will soon enjoy universal adherence. At the same time, we need to do more to implement the standards set forth therein.

Human trafficking is still one of the most prevalent forms of transnational organized crime, yet criminal accountability lags decisively behind, and far too often impunity prevails. In order to reverse that trend, we need stronger international coordination and cooperation and a robust mechanism to review the domestic implementation of international legal standards. Liechtenstein continues to engage constructively to that end with other States parties to the Palermo Convention and its Protocols. But we also need criminal justice systems that are sensitive to the situation of victims. Authorities must be proactive in lowering the barriers for victims who seek justice while guaranteeing them full protection, thereby contributing to ending the climate of fear and secrecy that breeds impunity. We particularly welcome the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in building capacities in that regard.

Liechtenstein has significantly increased its prevention efforts with regard to trafficking in persons over the past few years. Our experience shows that persons vulnerable to being trafficked are often willing to work together with the relevant authorities and institutions. Targeted and periodic awareness-raising campaigns, counselling and information about victims' assistance services have, in our experience, consistently met with a positive response and have shown the need to further improve engagement among all stakeholders.

At the same time, we cannot lose sight of the need to also address the root causes of trafficking. We have to acknowledge that poverty and hunger are often present at the beginning of the many individual tragedies of trafficked persons. Women and girls are most vulnerable and in need of particular protection. As we are currently discussing the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, we should aim for an ambitious contribution to addressing those root causes, including through the adoption of a human rights perspective to development.

Finally and most importantly, we have to pay increased attention to the particular needs and vulnerabilities of persons who have been trafficked. The legal framework in Liechtenstein has improved victims' protection during criminal proceedings and offers support services, which can include individualized and intensive psychological care designed to help break the cycle of revictimization, as well as legal counselling and reparations. Liechtenstein is committed to continuing and strengthening those efforts at the national level. We value this high-level meeting as a contribution to increased engagement at the international level.

Mr. Moreno Zapata (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Trafficking in persons is a grave violation of human rights that undermines human dignity. It is alarming that such a serious crime is the second most profitable illegal global business after illicit trafficking in weapons and drugs. That is why the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela believes that it is timely to convene this high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. This is the ideal forum for the international community to reflect on, debate and coordinate efforts to prevent and combat that abhorrent crime.

Addressing trafficking in persons has become an increasingly pressing challenge for a number of reasons, including its escalation as a result of globalization and broad access to communication and information technologies. According to the logic of rampant capitalism based on a relationship of exploitation and subjugation, people are considered in the light of an economic calculation where they are seen in terms of profits or their potential to provide wealth accumulation, whether it be as a market-client, a manufacturer or merchandise. In that context, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would reiterate that building a fair, egalitarian and liberating world is vital so that human beings are not considered objects but rather protagonists and players in development.

To prevent, control and combat the trafficking of persons effectively, it is necessary to have comprehensive policies that will strengthen the commitment of the State to broaden and deepen social programmes geared to combating and reducing poverty, social inequality and social exclusion. Those are the very root causes of vulnerability, especially for women, girls and boys, who become victims of what is a modern form of slavery.

Trafficking in persons is defined as a crime in Venezuelan law. Article 54 of our Constitution provides that

> "no person can be subject to slavery or bondage. Trafficking in persons, in particular, women, boys, girls and adolescents, in all its forms will be subject to the penalties provided for by law".

I should also like to refer to my country's organic law against organized crime and the financing of terrorism. That law, inclusive in character, provides protection to all persons in our country. In addition to defining the offence, it also provides for tougher penalties for traffickers and guarantees compensation for victims.

Other instruments available in Venezuela to combat trafficking are the Organic Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents, the Immigration and Migration Act, the criminal code and the Organic Law on the Right of Women to a Life Free from Violence.

The development model being implemented in Venezuela is focused on human well-being and based on the values of solidarity, justice, social inclusion, equality, respect, the fulfilment of human rights and citizen participation. The Government is therefore implementing a social justice policy aimed at eradicating poverty and overcoming exclusion. The aim is to achieve an inclusive and participatory society that is able to guarantee a decent life for all its members through the enjoyment of their social, economic, cultural, environmental, political and civil rights in a universal and equitable manner.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela believes that crime prevention is directly related to sustainable development, the strengthening of State structures, democracy with equality and social justice and respect for human rights. In that context, it is essential to implement measures that help eliminate the inequalities that promote crime at the domestic level. Those efforts must also be supported through international cooperation aimed at strengthening the capacity of States to ensure the full implementation of existing international instruments in this area and through international support to countries that request it.

Venezuela believes that prevention is the cornerstone of the fight against any form of organized crime, in particular human trafficking. A comprehensive approach to combating this crime requires a strengthening of social policies in order to prevent vulnerable groups from falling into the hands of criminal networks and to encourage international cooperation, taking into account the common but differentiated responsibilities that exist in that regard.

At the time of the Bolivarian revolution, the most comprehensive national network of social programmes in our national history was created. It was designed to meet the social needs of all our people, especially the poor and most vulnerable. As part of those national efforts, in 2012, the Bolivarian Government launched the "Gran Misión A Toda Vida" initiative, a comprehensive programme aimed at implementing policies conducive to solidarity, peaceful coexistence and full development. Among other goals, that comprehensive policy aims at decreasing the factors related to crime.

In addition, in order to take appropriate and effective measures to combat public and private acts of violence against women, the Government has developed a policy and an institutional framework, in compliance with the relevant international instruments, that gives ample protection to women and includes the creation of specialized courts and prosecutors, protective, precautionary and remedial measures and civic education activities. The Organic Law on the Right of Women to a Life Free from Violence, which classifies all types of gender-based violence regardless of scope, is considered one of the most advanced tools on the subject in Latin America.

With regard to access to justice, 44 special courts for the protection of women and gender equality and 46 special offices of the prosecutor for violence against women have been established. In 2010, the plenary of the Supreme Tribunal of Justice set up the National Commission on Gender Justice to ensure women's right to access to justice. Similarly, the Attorney General has established the Department for the Defence of Women, for the purposes of adequate and specialized tracking of cases of violence against women.

We emphasize that the fight against trafficking in persons is a responsibility that is shared by the countries of origin, transit and destination. We must highlight the importance of promoting international cooperation in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and other provisions of international law, in particular respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States,

non-intervention in internal affairs and the principles of sovereignty and equality.

To effectively address the crime of human trafficking, we must adopt comprehensive measures, promote international cooperation and strengthen multilateralism. Broad international cooperation among Member States and the relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations is also necessary. The Bolivarian Government reaffirms its commitment to preventing, suppressing and punishing human trafficking in order to build humane societies imbued with social justice.

Mr. Spinellis (Greece): Greece aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the observer of the European Union (EU) (see A/67/PV.77). I would like to make a few additional remarks in my national capacity.

Trafficking in persons ranks high among the heinous crimes of our time. This form of modern slavery is not only a direct affront to human dignity, but also a gross violation of the fundamental values of our society. According to the 2012 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, people from at least 136 nations were victims of trafficking in 118 countries around the world between 2007 and 2010. Although exact numbers cannot be verified, estimates put the number of trafficking victims to millions worldwide. In view of the magnitude of this international crime, its prevention and the punishment of its perpetrators require joint and concerted action by the international community.

This high-level meeting offers us an excellent opportunity to reaffirm our will to deal with this phenomenon. As previous speakers have pointed out, the enhancement of international cooperation at all levels is indispensable in order to prevent a further deterioration of the situation. Assessing the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, addressing its shortcomings and future challenges and implementing existing legal instruments are key to a results-oriented approach. The ratification of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, by no less than 154 countries and its implementation represent one of the most effective tools in this fight.

Greece reiterates its steadfast commitment to combat human trafficking, prosecute its perpetrators and protect the victims of these heinous acts. Over the past 10 years, my country has faced an unprecedented wave of illegal immigration, which serves as a channel exploited by organized criminal gangs in order to traffic people through and to Greece. Smuggling illegal migrants, forced labour and trafficking for sexual exploitation are, more often than not, interconnected crimes. We need to tackle them in a coordinated way in order to achieve long-lasting results.

The Greek Government, in close cooperation with local institutions and civil society, is implementing a comprehensive national action plan based on a victim-centred approach. In line with the EU strategy for the eradication of trafficking and Directive 2011/36, Greece is actively engaged in reinforcing its legal and operational framework and focusing on the three pillars of prevention, protection and prosecution through extensive regional and international cooperation. Improving the collection and processing of reliable and disaggregated statistics, harmonizing the criteria for victim identification through common guidelines, continuously training field professionals and health-care providers, increasing the conviction rate, raising awareness on the demand side of the problem and creating a corporate social responsibility platform of zero tolerance are only a few of the aspects of that action.

At the international level, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration and civil society, we are reaching out to detention centres in order to identify potential trafficking victims and provide them with legal support. Moreover, by creating shelters and offering vocational training aimed at social integration or voluntary repatriation programmes, we aspire to a comprehensive victim-centred approach.

The global economic crisis has undoubtedly exacerbated the problem of trafficking. It is well known that traffickers usually target impoverished regions of the world with harsh social and economic conditions and take advantage of the increased vulnerability of certain population groups, especially women and children. The many ways in which the crisis is affecting women was the topic of a workshop organized in April in Athens by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality and the Norwegian Embassy.

Without a doubt, now is the time to act. A decisive and holistic approach is indispensable if we want to put the scourge of human trafficking behind us. The

universal ratification of the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, as well as tackling the root causes of the phenomenon, among which figure poverty eradication and underdevelopment, are key actions that will lead us in that direction.

Mr. Motanyane (Lesotho): It is an honour for me to address this high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. I would like to thank the Secretary-General and express appreciation for the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* and the report on Trafficking in Women and Girls (A/67/170).

Allow me to associate myself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, who spoke yesterday on behalf of the African Group (see A/67/PV.77). However, I wish to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

The United Nations was established, inter alia, to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, the dignity and worth of the human person, and the equal rights of men and women. That noble ideal of our forebears could not become a reality if the scourge of human trafficking were to continue unabated. The adoption, in 2000, of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, in supplement thereto, as well as that of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking, in 2010, is clear testimony of the international community's resolve to restore faith in the dignity and worth of humankind. Ever since the adoption of the Convention, the Protocol and the Global Plan, major strides have been taken in preventing and combating trafficking in persons. However, much more remains to be done.

Human trafficking continues to be a chronic problem in the world today. Virtually every country is affected by the crime. Socioeconomic factors such as poverty, underdevelopment and a lack of equal opportunity fuel the scourge. Women and girls are more prone to trafficking due to social norms that marginalize their value and status in society.

The challenge therefore is how to translate our efforts to fight human trafficking into reality. It is our considered view that the crime is of such large magnitude that it cannot be successfully dealt with by any country alone. It requires all of us, both developing and developed countries, to work as a collective in implementing the following four pillars — preventing trafficking, prosecuting criminals, protecting and assisting victims of trafficking and forming partnerships. At the same time, the need to adopt and implement policies and programmes oriented towards fighting the scourge at the national, regional and international levels cannot be overemphasized. Equally important is increasing public awareness of human trafficking. A global society informed about the public threat that trafficking represents will surely act as a deterrent to potential perpetrators.

One of the greatest strides in the fight against human trafficking was the establishment of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking. The benefits of the Fund are well known to us. Many victims have been assisted by, and many more will reap benefits from, the Fund. We commend donor countries, both major and emerging, private donors, United Nations agencies and other donors for their contributions to it. We call on others that may be in a position to do so to consider making contributions to the Fund, as appropriate. Moreover, we commend the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for the efficiency with which it has administered the Fund, and we hope that it will continue to ensure that the Fund is administered in a transparent and accountable manner.

I would be remiss if I did not share with the Assembly the strides that Lesotho has made in fighting the scourge of human trafficking. My country remains committed to, and is engaged in, efforts to combat trafficking in persons. In the year 2000, Lesotho became a party to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. As a result, the Lesotho Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act No. 1 came into effect in 2011. The Act prohibits the recruitment, transporting, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion. We aim to intensify our efforts to create cross-border partnerships in the form of programmes between recipients and exporting countries. That initiative will focus on preventing people from being lured to other countries by kingpins and on supporting victims of human trafficking as they are repatriated.

Lesotho attaches great importance to mainstreaming trafficking issues in its national policies. That

is another positive step towards the provision of specialized services to prevent and protect victims of trafficking in persons. In that context, Lesotho established a multisectoral committee to combat trafficking in persons. The committee is entrusted with the implementation of a wide range of tools specifically aimed at ensuring adequate protection and the return and reintegration of victims. Moreover, the committee ensures Lesotho's contribution to the Southern African Development Community's 10-year strategic plan of action on combating human trafficking. We are optimistic that the plan of action will provide an invaluable opportunity to enhance our commitment to the prevention and protection of victims of trafficking.

Furthermore, it is Lesotho's experience that police-related efforts are decisive in combating trafficking in persons. It is important that there be close collaboration between all actors involved and law enforcement agencies such as the police in the fight against the menace of trafficking. The voices of victims are crucial in informing appropriate policymaking, law enforcement and advocacy efforts in that area. We believe that we need to partner with victims in order to succeed in addressing the issues of abuse, isolation and fear of seeking assistance.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Lesotho's commitment to combating trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and to ending the trafficking of human beings. Lesotho will continue to strengthen its efforts towards the successful implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and other relevant legal instruments.

The Acting President: I would take this opportunity to remind the Assembly that, in view of the fact that we have heard 19 speakers and have 41 more on the list for the present meeting, we should respect the five-minute time limit for statements, so that all speakers will have a chance to address the Assembly.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): The delegation of Ukraine is pleased to participate in this high-level meeting on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. We would like to thank the President of General Assembly for organizing this first-of-its-kind event, which provides us with the time and opportunity to assess achievements and challenges in the area of trafficking in human beings.

While Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the observer of the European Union (see A/67/PV.77), we find it relevant to make a statement that reflects our national perspective on the matter.

According to the 2012 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, "[t]here are indications that trafficking of victims from Eastern Europe and Central Asia to other parts of the world is decreasing". We believe that that is a very positive sign and that it bodes well for a further improvement of the situation in our region.

Yet Ukraine remains among the States most seriously affected by the evil that is human trafficking. According to research conducted at the request of the International Organization for Migration, the estimated number of individuals that were affected over the past decade by incidents of human trafficking in Ukraine amounts to almost 120,000 citizens.

Ukrainian victims of human trafficking have been identified in dozens of States. That fact shows that trafficking in human beings is a global problem that transcends national boundaries, despite the efforts of Governments, international organizations and civil society. That is why international partners' compliance with the principle of common and shared responsibility in the fight against human trafficking is crucial.

Respecting our obligations under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, the United Nations Global Plan of Action and other international treaties, Ukraine makes significant efforts to promote international cooperation in the area.

It is well known that any comprehensive approach designed to protect the internationally recognized human rights of victims of trafficking requires the adoption of domestic legislation incorporating the provisions of international human rights and other international conventions. Guided by that imperative, in 2011, the Parliament of Ukraine adopted the law on combating human trafficking, which charted a comprehensive policy of our Government in the field. The law details the responsibilities of the ministries and agencies involved in combating human trafficking and the procedures to follow in identifying the status of human trafficking victims and in providing aid to victims, including a one-time financial assistance payment. The new human trafficking law also provides

foreign trafficking victims with the opportunity to apply for a three-month temporary residency permit, which can be extended if the victim is engaged in legal proceedings or if his or her safety would be compromised by repatriation.

We strongly believe that trafficking in persons cannot be tackled through crime control or prosecution alone. Therefore, in 2012, the Government of Ukraine designated the Ministry of Social Policy as a national coordinator in combating human trafficking in all its manifestations. The Ministry is responsible for the coordination of activities of State agencies involved in countering trafficking in persons, in line with the recently adopted national anti-trafficking plan of action for the next three years.

However, we should not diminish the importance of and primary role played by law enforcement agencies in the fight, nor should we ignore the importance of capacity-building, which should be a priority for all Member States and their partners. In 2012, Ukrainian law enforcement agencies averted the trafficking of 115 potential victims, which is one of the most important indicators of the agencies' good performance.

In that regard, we would like to highlight the latest initiative of the American non-governmental organization Airline Ambassadors International, which will launch in Ukraine a project in which airline crews will receive training in how to identify potential victims. Another step in that direction is the establishment of a hotline within the Ukrainian Ministry of Social Policy for receiving calls from transportation-sector employees that would allow law enforcement officials to rescue victims before they disappear with traffickers.

Cooperation with international organizations, civil society, the private sector and media is crucial for effective protection and support of the victims of trafficking. We cannot overestimate the importance of our partners' support during the past decade. It is telling that more than 9,000 individuals affected by incidents of human trafficking over the past 10 years, including victims of labour trafficking, have received appropriate assistance in Ukraine from the actors I have mentioned.

We remain deeply committed to promoting stable international and regional cooperation and believe that Member States should take additional measures, including through information exchange, the sharing of experience, and technical and expert assistance, in order to effectively tackle the crime of human trafficking. Ukraine takes advantage of INTERPOL's global tools and services, which are broadly used by 190 of its members.

At the same time, cooperation between States within certain geographical regions has proved to be even more efficient. In the case of Ukraine, the European Police Office, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative, the Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova Group and the Commonwealth of Independent States are our major regional partners. We believe that regional and international cooperation among law enforcement agencies, especially between countries of origin, transit and destination, should be what we focus on today. We can and should take advantage of the practical networks provided by such partnerships.

We would like to reiterate Ukraine's strong support for the activities that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is carrying out within the framework of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, including the recent publication of its *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, the establishment of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and other relevant initiatives.

The fight against trafficking in human beings has been proposed as one of the human dimension priorities being addressed by the OSCE under the Ukrainian chairmanship this year. We continue to pursue a comprehensive human-rights-based approach to the global crime of human trafficking within the OSCE-initiated Alliance against Trafficking in Persons and on a bilateral basis under the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking. In that respect, the Ukrainian chairmanship will organize an international conference on combating trafficking in human beings from 10 to 11 June in Kyiv. We look forward to the active participation of the international community and a constructive discussion at that event.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for convening this high-level meeting.

I should like to endorse the statement made yesterday by the representative of Côte d'Ivoire on behalf of the African Group (see A/67/PV.77). I would now like to make several comments on behalf of the Libyan delegation.

The phenomenon of trafficking in persons is as old as the world. Trafficking in persons has long resulted in negative consequences around the world. We are currently strengthening our efforts to put an end to the phenomenon, as well as all forms of slavery and inequality.

No crimes relating to trafficking in persons have been recorded in our country. However, it is noteworthy that Libya is a transit country for illegal immigration between Africa and Europe. Therefore, we believe that there must be victims among the illegal immigrants that are passing through Libya on their way to other countries. That is why the Libyan authorities concerned have made unstinting efforts to grapple with the issue. Our officials are working in line with existing laws and international conventions and on the basis of regional and international cooperation.

For some time, Libya has been committed to working with different stakeholders in order to stem the tide of trafficking in persons, to establish national, regional and international assistance and to develop legislation and national systems to combat this crime.

Libya understands the phenomenon of trafficking in persons as a series of criminal acts, and not as an individual criminal act. That is because trafficking is a crime that involves tricking and transporting victims illegally into another country and exploiting them for the purposes of making money, after which money-laundering and other crimes ensue.

The problem of trafficking in persons is inextricably linked to economic and social development issues. The causes of the problem are deeply rooted in issues of poverty, unemployment, political instability and insecurity. Successfully fighting human trafficking therefore entails successfully promoting socioeconomic development in order to ensure that victims are no longer vulnerable. Any efforts undertaken under the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons should therefore take into account the economic and social circumstances of the country of origin. It is also important to create job opportunities based on development projects in the areas of agriculture, water resources and river management, small projects in remote areas, training and education programmes and the fight against corruption. We must also not forget the importance of transferring modern technologies that help people develop their economies and benefit from their own human and natural resources.

Solutions focused on security are temporary situations that cannot resolve the problem without effective international cooperation in order to provide economic assistance to the countries of origin of such illegal immigration. It is also important to put development projects in place in the poorest countries and to ensure control over borders with those countries. We must also take firm action against human traffickers and initiate media awareness-raising campaigns targeting citizens in the communities that are most exposed to illegal immigration.

Libya belongs to the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking. We therefore seek to strengthen the United Nations role in combating this phenomenon and to better coordinate all of our efforts in the fight against human trafficking. We have a number of different tools available to us to that end, including the Global Plan of Action.

The Global Plan of Action is the crowning achievement of international efforts geared towards awareness-raising on this problem. The Global Plan of Action will make it possible for us to take a number of different steps to fight human trafficking at the international, national and local levels and to promote a linkage between the Millennium Development Goals and efforts to deal with the root causes of human trafficking. The Plan of Action also provides the means to deploy national and international instruments to put an end to transnational organized crime and to fill the gaps in the legal regime. It also strengthens the logistical and regulatory framework in order to provide better coordination among the various stakeholders and allows us to take measures to fight human trafficking, make use of international instruments, avoid duplication of effort and use the various resources provided by the stakeholders involved in order to put an end to human trafficking.

Libya is committed to cooperating with all parties at all levels in order to stem the phenomenon of human trafficking. We are also committed to supporting national, regional and international efforts to fight the criminal networks and prosecute those responsible for these crimes. We commit ourselves to providing protection and rehabilitation to victims of human trafficking through the full implementation of the Protocols of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Mr. El Mkhantar (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to align myself with the statement made yesterday by the representative of Côte d'Ivoire on behalf of the African Group (see A/67/PV.77).

The close correlation between human trafficking, transnational organized crime and the exploitation of children through the worst forms of child labour, including their involvement in armed conflict, requires priority strategies and the sustained commitment and solidarity of the international community.

Organized crime and other criminal networks pose a real threat to many countries that are vulnerable in terms of their security, stability or socioeconomic development, or which are emerging from long years of armed conflict. Human trafficking has terrible international consequences, and therefore no country can implement an effective strategy to protect itself alone. The fight against this scourge requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that emphasizes the human and socioeconomic aspects of the issue on the basis of shared responsibility.

In that context, we welcome the work done by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and urge Member States to support its efforts in ratifying the relevant existing conventions and related protocols. According to data from the UNODC 2012 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, women accounted for the majority of victims worldwide from 2007 to 2012 — approximately between 55 and 60 per cent — with girls representing between 15 and 20 per cent of victims. Those figures are significant and provide a clear picture of the extent of this scourge and its social impact on the most vulnerable members of society.

In accordance with its international commitments, since 2007 Morocco has implemented a comprehensive strategy against human trafficking that covers the operational, legal, institutional, socioeconomic, developmental and awareness-raising aspects of the issue. Concrete results have been achieved, in particular through a significant decrease in illegal flows from Morocco and a disruption of migrant trafficking networks, which have been forced to use other migration routes, including in sub-Saharan Africa.

With regard to prevention, it is clear that the eradication of this scourge remains dependent upon combating its root causes, including poverty, illiteracy and social exclusion. But it also depends upon ensuring respect for the rule of law and good governance.

Morocco's national childhood action plan for the period from 2005 to 2015 pays special attention to street children, in particular by increasing the number of welcome centres, providing training and psychosocial support for victims and making efforts to combat all forms of labour exploitation of women and children in household work. Prevention efforts also include awareness-raising aimed at potential victims, officials responsible for border control and non-governmental organizations working on the ground.

In terms of protection, measures taken by the Moroccan authorities provide psychosocial support to victims and equitable access to emergency health care, allowing for victims' rehabilitation with a view to their voluntary return to their countries of origin. Legally speaking, we must protect victims against potential retaliation or intimidation as a result of their testimony during preliminary investigations or before courts.

A firm commitment by the international community to eradicating this phenomenon requires concerted multilateral efforts combined with sustained regional and subregional cooperation and supported by appropriate technical assistance.

Morocco remains committed to contributing to the international community's efforts and to fulfilling its national and regional role in combating trafficking in persons and its negative effects.

Mr. Khakimov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): Human trafficking is an aspect of transnational organized crime and creates a threat to humankind's honour, dignity, peaceful existence and future. It is of great concern to all since it knows no borders and greatly affects mainly women and young people.

Beginning in 2000, combating human trafficking has been one of the key areas of international cooperation within the framework of the United Nations. For the community of nations, the adoption, on 15 November 2011, of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, was an important milestone.

Uzbekistan acceded to the Protocol by adopting relevant domestic legislation on 8 July 2008. In addition, my country has acceded to the majority of international

conventions aimed at combating trafficking in persons and protecting its victims, including conventions on combating trafficking in persons and the exploitation of the prostitution of others, on transnational organized crime, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol thereto on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, as well as many others.

Over the past 20 years, Uzbekistan has been signatory to more 30 bilateral agreements on combating the most dangerous types of organized crime, including human trafficking.

Today, we have created the appropriate legislative basis to eliminate the crime in my country. We have adopted a specific law to combat human trafficking. A 2008 decree by President Islam Karimov on measures to increase the effectiveness of combating human trafficking has become a significant driver in expanding the scope of our preventive efforts. Pursuant to the decree, a comprehensive national plan of action was adopted and implemented to increase the effectiveness of combating human trafficking. Of special importance has been spreading awareness among citizens to protect them from the scourge. Pamphlets, booklets and other educational materials have been published and distributed. In high traffic areas, such as bus stations, train stations and airports, we have put up billboards and banners to raise awareness of the danger of human trafficking and its consequences.

One of the important tasks before us is the social rehabilitation of victims of trafficking. Article 10 of the Uzbek law on human trafficking provides for the social rehabilitation of victims in order for them to return to normal life and have access to legal aid, psychological, medical and professional rehabilitation and assistance in finding jobs and temporary housing. To that end, we have built housing for victims of trafficking in order to facilitate their social rehabilitation.

The Republic of Uzbekistan is one of the members of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking. We intend to continue to combat the scourge through systematic preventive work and by updating our legislation to put an end to the commission of that egregious crime.

Mr. Khan (Indonesia): Allow me to begin by congratulating the President for convening this high-level meeting to appraise the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for their remarks yesterday (see A/67/PV.77). I am also grateful to Ambassador Martin Sajdik of Austria and Ambassador Antonio Pedro Montero Lima of Cape Verde for their hard work as facilitators in drafting the modalities of today's meeting.

Before I proceed with my remarks, let me also express my appreciation to Ms. Mira Sorvino, United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for the Global Fight against Human Trafficking, and Ms. Alyse Nelson, President of Vital Voices Global Partnership, for their ongoing contributions and dedication to this very important subject.

By definition, trafficking in persons is tantamount to modern-day slavery. It is a heinous crime and a betrayal of human dignity. It reduces human beings to mere objects for the purpose of exploiting them. To make matters infinitely worse, the majority of the victims of the practice are the most vulnerable in society, namely, women and children.

The paradox is that trafficking in persons is among the most profitable and lowest-risk of crimes. The 2012 UNODC *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* shows that trafficking for the purpose of forced labour alone generates close to $32 billion annually.

Against that background, it comes as no surprise that trafficking in persons has become a transnational industry and a global operation. According to UNODC, between 2007 and 2010 victims of trafficking represented 136 different nationalities and were detected in 118 States. Those grave and shocking facts should strengthen our global resolve and bolster our efforts to combat trafficking in persons and to provide assistance and protection to its victims. Indonesia therefore sees this high-level meeting as a welcome opportunity to look more deeply into various aspects of trafficking in persons and to better orchestrate our cooperation in future.

I wish to reiterate the firm commitment of my Government to combat trafficking in persons. At the national level, our commitment is expressed through the adoption of our National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Trafficking in Women and Children and the National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. Those legal measures are put in place within the framework of the law on the countering trafficking in persons.

Economic and social measures are used to prevent such crimes from occurring. They include a credit scheme without collateral for poor families, scholarships, the establishment of community learning centres and special training for women. We also conduct public outreach programmes to bring all the relevant stakeholders to the same understanding of trafficking in persons.

For those who have already been victimized, Indonesia has a two-fold response that entails treatment and empowerment. Treatment focuses on physical and psychological rehabilitation, with a view to victims' social reintegration, while empowerment is especially designed to arm them with necessary skills and knowledge. Those two types of measures are implemented through cross-sector cooperation, which involves various ministries, law enforcement agencies and non-governmental organizations.

At the global level, Indonesia's commitment to preventing and combating trafficking in persons is also guided by the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, as a complementary measure to fulfilling our obligations as party to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

It is also my pleasure to state that Indonesia has long been an instrumental partner in the implementation of the Plan at the regional level. For more than 10 years, Indonesia and Australia have chaired the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. That mechanism represents a strong partnership in support of the Global Plan of Action at the regional and national levels. It is a multi-stakeholder forum involving countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as the relevant international organizations, such as the International Organization for Migration, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

The Bali Process offers participants an opportunity to share best practices and identify the necessary capacity-building programmes. Moving forward, the Bali Process has now agreed on the establishment of a regional support office in Bangkok to administer a regional cooperation framework to reduce the irregular movement of people in the Asia-Pacific region. We also agreed on the establishment of a working group, under the Bali Process mechanism, specifically dedicated to addressing the trafficking in persons. The working group is also mandated to look into the issue of labour trafficking, which has been identified as a growing problem in the region.

Indonesia also works closely with other Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to enhance regional frameworks against trafficking in persons, which are reflected in the ASEAN Declaration on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, and in the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint.

On the basis of Indonesia's experiences, I wish to emphasize three key aspects that I hope will bring focus and clarity to our global efforts.

First, we must exert the greatest efforts at the level of prevention. In that regard, we must identify the conditions that are conducive to the trafficking in persons in countries of origin as well as in transit and destination countries. A concerted public-awareness campaign is also critical to educating people about the methods that are employed by traffickers to lure victims. Furthermore, deterrent messages must be projected through effective prosecution of the traffickers. Last but not least, in the area of prevention, we must also look into the phenomena of poverty, unemployment, marginalization, conflicts and insecurity as the major factors behind the rise of human trafficking practices.

Secondly, early-detection mechanisms must be strengthened with the involvement of all stakeholders. It is our belief that information-sharing networks must continue to be developed at all levels. Since preventing trafficking in persons from taking place is a time-sensitive effort, robust information-sharing networks will help ensure the availability of information to the relevant agencies in a timely fashion. I recognize the huge challenge of developing and nurturing such a network at the domestic level, especially in a country as large as Indonesia, but the benefits are well worth the investment.

The third key aspect is the protection of victims. The unfortunate victims of trafficking need assistance that goes beyond physical and psychological comfort. They need skills and capabilities that will enable them to reintegrate into society and avoid being dragged into exploitative situations in future.

Before concluding my statement, I wish to reiterate that effective measures to combat trafficking in persons require us to put more effort into the dimensions of development and human rights that would complement the dimension of law and order. In that respect, it is important to stress that addressing the root causes of trafficking in persons, particularly its economic and social aspects, will prove decisive to the success of our global effort.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): Trafficking in persons around the globe, particularly women and children, is an egregious violation of human rights. It is rooted in the social and economic conditions in the countries from which most of the victims come. Discrimination against women and children and cruel indifference to human suffering fuel this ignoble and criminal trade.

Pakistan welcomes this important high-level debate. The strong commitment expressed by high-level global leaders should help us find ways to combat this dastardly crime.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon rightly pointed out that human trafficking devastates individuals and undermines national economies. Billions of dollars are generated through exploitation and abuse, which are then used for illegal drugs, corruption and other crimes. This heinous crime transcends borders, involves different nationalities and exploits loopholes in various laws. International cooperation is absolutely necessary to effectively combat this modern form of slavery at all levels. The Secretary-General also outlined various steps taken by the United Nations to protect victims, prosecute traffickers and put an end to this crime. We support those efforts.

The adoption of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, in 2010, was an important step. It embodied the international community's resolve to address this issue seriously. In line with the Plan, Pakistan has taken a number of legislative and administrative steps to successfully counter trafficking in persons.

We have promulgated the Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance, which includes a role for civil society to work with law enforcement agencies in rehabilitating victims of human trafficking. A special anti-trafficking unit has been set up within the Federal Investigation Agency to crack down on human traffickers.

Secure borders are a deterrent to this international crime. Pakistan's adoption of the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System, which is implemented with international help, provides immigration authorities and law enforcement agencies with systematic and authentic information to identify travellers moving across our borders.

We can tackle international crime with an integrated and comprehensive approach and with firm long-term political and financial commitment. To effectively address the challenge of trafficking in persons, we would like to suggest the following.

We must raise public awareness at all levels, with the aim of eliminating the demand for trafficking in persons. We must also foster a global partnership against trafficking in persons and other contemporary forms of slavery. Such a partnership must include cooperation among Member States and the relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. We must continue to make efforts to criminalize trafficking in persons in all its forms, including for labour and sexual exploitation. The relevant laws must provide for appropriate penalties for trafficking in persons while ensuring the non-criminalization of trafficked persons. Finally, we must ensure the provision of humanitarian, legal and financial aid to the victims of trafficking in persons, in particular women and children. The United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, should be fully used for that purpose. Assistance to victims of trafficking must be provided with full respect for their human rights and dignity.

The Secretary-General could provide the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme with sufficient resources for the full implementation of its mandates and provide adequate support to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

Pakistan appreciates the work done by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and encourages it to continue its efforts to impart training and provide technical assistance to Governments and the victims of trafficking. Member States should also enhance their voluntary contributions to UNODC for assistance to Member States.

Mr. Tin (Myanmar): Today, my delegation hardly needs to stress the clear and present danger of trafficking

in persons to humankind, as it has been widely recognized as one of the most pervasive human rights violations that poses a serious threat to human dignity, security and development. We must therefore focus our deliberation today on reviewing our efforts on the four pillars and the progress made in the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

In my country, poverty, a lack of job opportunities and many other pull factors in destination countries have driven many poor and vulnerable groups to fall victim to traffickers. Fully aware of that threat, the Government of Myanmar has taken a series of concrete steps to combat human trafficking, including through law enforcement against human trafficking. It has been cooperating closely with the international community, its neighbours and subregional groupings to put an end to this hideous act. The Government is also addressing the issue of poverty, which is the root cause of the problem, by focusing its efforts on poverty alleviation and equitable development.

The Government has already instituted the necessary mechanisms and effective law enforcement measures to prosecute traffickers. The penal code, which provides legal provisions for heavy penalties to be levied against perpetrators, has been strengthened by our anti-human-trafficking law enacted in September 2005. To facilitate the task, a central body and State-, regional- and township-level bodies on the prevention of trafficking in persons and the protection of victims have been in place since 2006. Thpse bodies were reconstituted in 2011 to effectively implement the law.

Myanmar has drawn up a national-level work plan covering prevention, law enforcement, protection and rehabilitation activities since 1997. It is currently in the process of implementing the third three-year plan for the period from 2011 to 2013 to combat human trafficking.

With a view to strengthening the multisectoral response to human trafficking in the greater Mekong subregion, an agreement was put in place in 2004 under the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking. In 2009, memorandums of understanding on the prevention of human trafficking were also signed with two main destination countries, namely, Thailand and the People's Republic of China. Myanmar is also participating in anti-trafficking activities under other regional frameworks, such as the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.

At the international level, Myanmar is also party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two supplementary Protocols. Those initiatives further demonstrate Myanmar's commitment to combat human trafficking in keeping with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Thanks to our preventive, educational and enforcement measures, a total of nearly 30,000 people have already been prevented from falling into the hands of traffickers since 2001. A total of 2,729 offenders have also been apprehended. Since 1992, Myanmar has received over 1,600 trafficked victims, who were handed over from various destination countries. Myanmar's serious efforts and progress in this area were widely recognized by the international community, as reflected in Myanmar's upgrading to tier 2, from its lower ranking of tier 3, in the United States State Department's most recent report on trafficking in persons.

The Government has also made progress in no small measure in addressing the issue of forced labour and underage recruitment for military purposes. Some significant achievements include the agreement of a joint strategy with the International Labour Organization aimed at eliminating forced labour by 2015 and the signing of the joint action plan with the United Nations in 2012 to end the recruitment and use of underage children for military services.

Those national efforts will be more effective and fruitful with the enhancement of international assistance and partnerships. With the growing interest of the donor community in the new Myanmar, we are hopeful that we will receive enhanced international assistance from the international community.

My delegation wishes to conclude by emphasizing the need to strengthen partnerships in addressing human trafficking in all its forms through a collective and concerted international response. Myanmar stands ready to further strengthen its national and regional efforts and partnerships in effective implementation of the Global Plan of Action against this most serious transnational crime.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.